Steep rise in prices of essential commodities

†620. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of essential commodities of daily use like atta, dal, rice, oil, etc. have registered steep rise in the recent past;

(b) if so, the percentage of increase in the essential commodities of daily use registered during the last six months and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether one of the reasons for this is hoarding;

(d) if so, the measures being taken by Government to check hoarders; and

(e) whether Government would act against hoarders by enforcing the Essential Commodities Act, so that the price rise may be checked?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Sir, the prices of some of the essential commodities have increased intermittently during the recent past.

(b) As per the latest available information the percentage increase in the composite price level (WPI based) of essential commodities over the 33 weeks of the current financial year with respect to end March of the previous financial year is 5.69 per cent.

(c) to (e) There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the rise in prices of essential commodities have been due to hoarding. Nevertheless, Government, at end August, 2006 has facilitated fixing of stock limit and licensing requirement in respect of wheat and pulses by the respective State Governments and advised them to take effective action using the powers vested with them under the Essential Commodities Act.

Sales tax on imported crude oil

621. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are generating huge amount of income by way of sales tax and octroi from imported crude oil, petrol and diesel;

(b) if so, what are the details of sales tax and octroi earned by various States/UTs per barrel during the last two years and for the month of April/ May, 2006, month-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.